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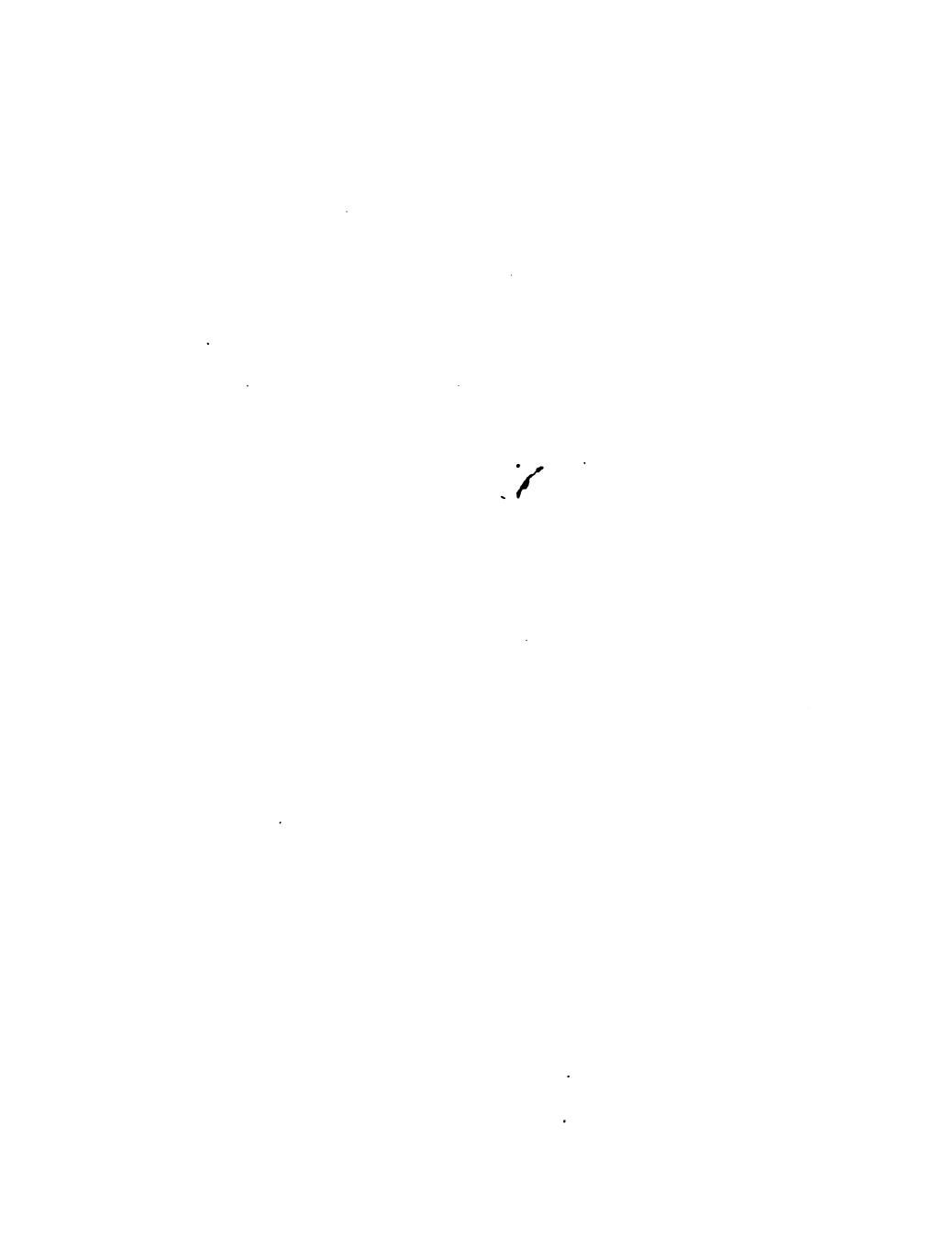
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*LONDON*  
*SELF-GOVERNED.*

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SIR WILLIAM FRASER.



# LONDON SELF-GOVERNED.

BY

SIR WILLIAM ~~F~~RASER, BART.,

M.A., F.S.A.

LONDON :

FRANCIS HARVEY, 4, ST. JAMES'S STREET.

1866.

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1866 F8

I will venture to say there is more Learning, and Science within the circumference of ten miles from where we now sit, than in all the rest of the Kingdom.

JOHNSON ON LONDON.

This wonderful Metropolis, which has within the last six years added not less than two hundred and ninety miles to its extent, imperatively requires that those Establishments, which are to minister to the common wants, should keep pace with its growth and magnitude. They can only be undertaken by PUBLIC BODIES; they can only be successfully carried out by PUBLIC SPIRIT.

THE PRINCE CONSORT.



## LONDON SELF-GOVERNED.

**S**ELF-GOVERNMENT is, I believe, the noblest result of Civilization: It is at once the Test, and Effect of Wisdom and Patriotism. Is London unworthy to possess this? Are three millions of Englishmen to be for ever barred from this Privilege?

If it were in the power of an Individual to bestow a Government upon three millions, having many interests in common, and absolutely dependent on each other for social well-being, at what should we estimate him, if he were to break them up into numerous communities, conflicting in their views, antagonistic in their con-



6            *London Self-governed.*

duct, and refusing to unite on any terms for the Common Good?

Is this the present condition of LONDON?  
Is this a State of Things without remedy?

Is there one reasoning being who walks these thoroughfares to-day who can doubt that the Rule of LONDON is nearly so bad as it can be?

What is the present State of Things?  
Are the Streets and Footways ankle deep in mud, or are they not? Shall we be wet through for certain before we reach home? Are there persevering beggars who pester us at every crossing? Do we run great risk, even at our active years, of bringing a fee to the Coroner? Is it cruel or is it not, to lay down three inches of loose granite? Is it cruel to select the time of year when horses are weakest?

Are our Horses tortured, and lamed by this? Is it judicious to pave one side of the Street in one manner, and the other in another? Is this necessary?

Was last Wednesday a hot day? did we find our coat, and everything in our house, covered with dust before noon? are we perpetually calling the attention of the Servants to the condition of the furniture? Does this calling produce the slightest effect? will Windows keep out the dust? will Cupboards? or Drawers? or Glass-cases? When we take a stroll, when we go to our business, when we "go down" to the Senate, are we blinded with particles of matter, or are we not?

Do those Gas Lamps really give any light? or only beg our pardon for not doing so? are the Lamp-posts upright?

are they nearly so? Do they not appear like the phantoms of GUSTAVE DORÉ'S Pencil, mocking us with an inebriated roll?

Does the Gas, if we are forced to admit it into our dwellings, poison us? do we feel depressed, and irritable from the poison? do we have headaches after using the Gas?

Is the Gas of the worst possible kind? is the Gas given us for nothing? do we pay high rates? ought we to have good Gas for the money we pay? Do we pay for watering the Streets? Are we visited by TYPHUS? Does Typhus kill every year more than fell at WATERLOO? Is this necessary? Whose fault is it? Is it not any one's? Is it inevitable? and so on.

These are not my Questions, they are

yours, Intelligent Reader, Questions that you have asked yourself over and over again.

Let us, for the sake of argument only, admit that the condition of LONDON is abominable: is the British mind so degenerate that our Race is unable to free itself from this miserable Tyranny? the Tyranny of apathy, and mismanagement, and neglect. I cannot believe it: let us see how things are:

Twenty-five years ago, LONDON was the best ordered City in EUROPE; it is now nearly the worst.

During the last ten years the condition of the Streets has been gradually deteriorating; it is scarcely possible to conceive anything worse than the present state: those paved, and those macadamized are rivals in

abomination. Stones, in many places Shingle from the sea beach, unbroken, thrown down in heaps, and unrolled, are left for the long process of wearing down by wheels two inches broad.\*

The Roadways of LONDON should not be made on the same principle as the Lanes of a Country Town; a Traffic exists here such as is seen nowhere else; your London Street must be an Organized Machine, adapted to constant, and very hard work; and until it is so constructed, you may pour your gold for ever, and with no result.

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\* The time of 'year, when horses are weakest, is generally selected by the Vestries to lay down Stones, a most barbarous Act of Cruelty: No remonstrance is listened to; and no practical controul whatever is exercised over these Boards.

The sinking in of the granite laid down, and the oozing up of the mud between the paving stones, should have taught this long ago.

Whatever the surface may be, a London Street must be built from the Foundation.

When the permanent way of a Railroad Company, even that which can scarcely scrape together a nominal Dividend, is out of order, do the workmen labour for so many hours a day, then go to bed, then begin again, or do they work on until the Road is fit for use? In the great thoroughfares of LONDON, where at least one thousand times the traffic passes, a few dilatory workmen gossip through the day, and when night closes in, i.e. at 4 o'clock p. m., go home; to reappear the next day; and so

on for weeks ; the whole Traffic being stopped ; the whole custom of neighbouring Tradesmen being at an end.

As regards the Public Vehicles of LONDON, they are certainly worse than those of any City of BRITAIN, or the Continent : in poor, benighted ROME, you can hire a carriage, clean, comfortable, going a good pace, and with a civil driver, for a very moderate sum, by distance, or hour. What are London four-wheeled Cabs? glass, and wood boxes on wheels, angular, not stuffed, so noisy that you can scarcely hear your own voice ; and frequently with a Ruffian on the box, who will not hesitate to cover you with obscenity, if you do not give him one third more than his legal fare : To a sick man, they are a torturing death, and few Women will trust themselves alone in

a Cab after dark : and these abominations are inspected by the Police. The Inspector of Cabs must have peculiar Ideas. Is there the smallest reason that London Cabs should not be so good as those of any Continental City ? \*

We know by bitter experience what is the Congestion of Traffic in the present day ; but what will it be Ten years hence ? When serving on LORD STANLEY'S Com-

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\* I do not believe a word of the creed that many Cab-drivers are Clergymen : I do believe that some are Returned Convicts.

The gain to the Revenue of £41,947 per annum may account for the granting licences to very disreputable persons.

Many Cabmen cannot read even figures : few are even tolerably acquainted with the topography of LONDON. The act against stealing property left in cabs is a dead letter : the magistrates not enforcing the giving a ticket on hiring, as the act directs.



mittee, on the Inner Circle Metropolitan Railway, in 1864, I heard a great deal from Counsel, as to the advantage to accrue from the relief of the Traffic; I do not believe that ten Railways would perceptibly diminish the Crowd on the footways, nor in the Streets of LONDON.

The energetic measures, which must be carried now, should have been made Law twenty years ago.

The allowing large Vans, going slowly, to fill the Streets during daylight; the permitting Carts, &c. to stand at right angles to the Roadway; the nonexistence of Subways, and Street Bridges, in these days of Glass and Iron, all show what apathy has reigned for years.

Did any one ever see such objects as the London Statues? It is true, that these

ghastly Caricatures have been wisely stowed away in the dense centres of the Squares, where none but the meditative Nursery-maid, or reckless Infancy can detect their impropriety.\*

There is not space here to criticize the details of Parochial Mismanagement; but one fact will speak for all: In the middle of this nineteenth century, the Parochial Authorities have not learnt how to light, nor to put out a Lamp, without the im-

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\* Have you ever, Reader, paused a moment in Leicester Square to observe that Statue in its midst? Of whom is it? It was once literally in the centre of the Great Globe itself; and many believed that it was done for: but no, after a few years passed in that mysterious region, it cropped up, fresher than ever, except that one leg was gone, and half the other; and so it remains: There is a sham-leg shop near, perhaps it is an advertisement!

mense waste of labour, of a man climbing up and down twelve rounds of a ladder, twice in 24 hours; Credite Posteris! I believe in one, or two Parishes, this monstrous absurdity has been changed, but only in one, or two. The Gas lamps generally bear the Cypher of the GEORGES, their curious forms must puzzle the intelligent Foreigner, the glass is often broken, the top almost invariably knocked off.\*

It is stated by Chemical Experimenters, that dust moistened will produce, after a time, Animalcules: It is the belief of the most experienced Students of Physiology that great numbers of the disorders affecting the mucous membrane are caused by in-

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\* Who are the mysterious beings who remove the knobs (like a chess-queen's)? Spirit of ELIA reply!

finitely small Insects, whose reproduction is incalculable : Who can say that the myriads contained in an ounce of Dust may not be inhaled into the Lungs, or swallowed by the Dwellers in Cities? Is it not highly probable that this is the case ?

This Summer, Cholera, in its most awful form, will visit us ; thousands will die a death of torture, and leave tens of thousands to hopeless want : Surely some effort may be made : Cholera is almost impossible without decaying matter.\*

As regards general Dirtiness, it is not easy to define it ; I have no doubt some

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\* Riding one day in LAMBETH, I suddenly came upon a series of newly built Streets, close to the Archbishopal Palace, in which a deep River of black mud was in place of the roadway : A sort of stercorous VENICE ! While meditating upon this peculiar state of

lovers of the Things that Be, will say that nothing could be better than the Rule of Vestries, but there is a clause in the Act of 1855 about which there can be no arguing.

Clause CXVIII. says, It shall be lawful for every Vestry to appoint, and pay, suitable Persons, to cleanse, and sweep crossings for passengers over the Streets ; which Persons shall be distinguished by their dress, or some distinctive mark, as Public Servants. Has this been done ?

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things, and wondering whether the mud was sufficiently fluid to enable my horse to swim, I saw over head, on a Railway Arch, these remarkable words,—

“Vote for your Tried and Trusted Friend —— !”

I spare his name.

Here was a History ! here was an epitome of Neglect, Mismanagement, and false Economy ! and then the poor souls were to vote for their tried, and trusted friend ! I wonder if they did ! Probably !

Have not the Vestries preferred, having obtained money on these conditions, to leave the unfortunate Ratepayer to be pestered ten times a day for a Tax, which he has already paid?\*

Have we not heard, every week for years, of the constant Frauds upon the People of LONDON by the Gas and Water Companies? Would this be the case, if these Companies had to deal with bodies, so powerful as themselves? Do they not triumph over the poor, weak, inefficient Vestries, and laugh at their puny opposition? Is it not the case, that in Towns of

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\* The man who begs with a carabine, as in GIL BLAS, can be refused: "Blow away! my hearty, Drive on, Coachman!" was the reply of the Sailor: but you cannot leave a Crossing Sweeper without feeling a Brute, or a Fool.

the North of England, the Gas-lighting is carried on by the Corporation, and not only at a cheaper rate, but that a large profit is annually carried to the benefit of the Town, and used for paving purposes?

Is there any valid reason that Taxation should be only of one kind? Is there any reason that an experienced, and enlightened Body of men should not devise various methods of raising money for the purpose of Improvement?

Is it just that the special tax on London Hackney Carriages, originally levied for Paving, should be paid into the Imperial Exchequer?\*

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\* The Tax on Hackney Carriages was imposed in the 14th year of Charles II, for the purpose of Paving, Amending, and Enlarging the Streets of London; it was transferred to the Imperial Exchequer in the Reigu

I believe the amount of Rates, raised in LONDON, would, if economically administered, be ample for keeping the Metropolis in a good condition: the amount, exclusive of Poor Rates, and without the City, has been stated, on good authority, to be one million, two hundred and sixty-three thousand, three hundred and sixty-three pounds per annum. The lighting by Gas ought to be in the hands of the Municipality; instead of in those of a few monopolizing Companies, who charge a very high price, give very bad Gas, and laugh at the Ratepayers.

Anything more sordid than the state of our principal Thoroughfares would seem to be impossible,\* but let the intelligent

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of William III: the extra tax for Metropolitan over other Hackney Carriages is £41,947.

\* During this winter the snow was allowed to re-



Reader walk through some of the back streets of his Neighbourhood; let him observe the Refuse, Vegetable and Animal, left to rot for weeks; no removal; all is allowed to remain, and decay, and then when his favourite daughter dies of Scarlet Fever, or leaves her bed deaf, or a cripple for life, let him remember that this might have been prevented, had the Lanes of LONDON been like those of a Civilized Community.

Fever Hospitals are mere waste of money, while we daily distil the Poison which gives Fever.

If there is one fact that Medical Science has demonstrated, it is, that TYPHUS, and

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main for three days; to render all traffic impossible; and to deluge the houses; no effort whatever was made to remove it.

the hideous throat diseases known as DIPHTHERIA and SCARLET FEVER are preventable.

There are some wants in LONDON that Children building a baby-town would not have forgotten: the compulsory, visible, and uniform numbering of houses; the placing the names of Streets on the Gas-lanterns, are so obvious, that their non-existence for a day is discreditable.

In so vast an aggregate as three millions, the relations of each Individual to the whole, and each to another, are different from those of any other Community.

NINEVEH, BABYLON, and THEBES, were vast Cities, but the population dwelt in houses differing in almost every respect from those of our day. The houses of Ancient Cities were surrounded by gardens,

absorbing refuse, and giving out oxygen.

As regards a most important Influence on the health, and enjoyment, of the closely packed People of LONDON, the preservation of Open Spaces for Public Recreation, what means are there at present of keeping one acre of suburban land from the all devouring Railway Influence?

The tired Mechanic, the Sunday Wanderer, even the more hardly worked Lawyer, or Man of the Desk, will soon find not a spot of green grass near LONDON: a year or two ago, STREATHAM was a fair and wild Common; a walk, or ride, not forgetting JOHNSON, was a treat: where is STREATHAM now? Where will WALTHAM, EPPING, WOODFORD, and HIGHGATE, be in a few years?

We must not be misled by any fancied analogy: We must legislate for LONDON as LONDON; in each smaller City there is sure to be some Active Spirit, whose energy, and sense of Public Right will keep the sloth of the many from stagnation: In LONDON, the One, though his energy be superhuman, must for a certainty be lost among the Many: unless you clothe him with Despotic Authority, and this the British People have too true an instinct to submit to.

The present Population of LONDON is larger than that of SCOTLAND; but the enormous numbers living in such close proximity give no just idea of the necessity of Special Legislation: If ever there were a case where a necessity for a Peculiar Government existed, it exists in the case of LONDON.

The extent will become larger in an almost terrible ratio: the whole County of MIDDLESEX will soon be absorbed; indeed it is difficult to assign limits to the ultimate size of the Metropolis.

Many opportunities have been lost for making LONDON the City of the World; its Dignity equalling its size.

When the Great Fire occurred, an Architect of almost unrivalled merit lived; his grand, and artistic design to make a vast Street from the present site of ST. PAUL'S to KENSINGTON would have created a Vista, such as the World has never seen: Churches of beautiful design were to extend in a stately chain, and the THAMES would, by WREN's plan, have been the River of Rivers; lined with Palaces; Air, and Water-space unrivalled; access by Land, and

Water, excellent; and two thirds of the present congestion would have been avoided. The opportunity was lost; and it is only lately that any serious effort has been made towards the Thames Embankment: Would this have been the case, had there existed, during these two hundred years, a Municipal Body at all in proportion to the interests of LONDON?

The very year that the Metropolitan Board came into existence, the Thames Embankment was designed.

We see, every day, some improvement in Street Architecture; there is no very great merit in the Magazines and Warehouses, now rising, but they are decided improvements on the hideous uniformity of past days; and the taste for good Architecture, springing up of late years, will, no

doubt, bring us to something not unworthy of London: WHITEHALL, SOMERSET HOUSE, and a few more, are glorious models: ST. PAUL'S I believe to be finer than ST. PETER'S; though probably inferior to MICHAEL ANGELO'S original design: ST. MARTIN'S is almost perfect, and many of the City Churches are Pictures of grace: Surely the encouragement which would be given to Art by the Republic of LONDON would at last rival that of VENICE.

A most obvious, but neglected Improvement, is the increase of the number of Bridges: One great Cause of the incessant block in the Streets north of the THAMES, is the want of lateral relief: the old method of Toll has gone from Metropolitan Roads: London Bridges should be free, on the same principle.

A great, and constant necessity for the People of LONDON is Markets of adequate dimensions. Can anything be more meagre than the present Markets of LONDON?

Great alterations have been made of late years in the Laws affecting Imports; Surely if this is right, every facility should be given to the Interior of the State, for buying, and selling.

Look at COVENT GARDEN, and other Markets; who would believe that these wretched Places are the only Bazaars in which the necessities of Life are obtainable?

Of course, I must not compare these Markets with those of a Foreign Country, but I say that, taken abstractedly, they would be a disgrace to a Town one-twentieth the size of LONDON. The poor, uneconomical method of conveying food to



these wretched receptacles is quite unworthy of Science. Waggons toiling along during the night ; garbage lying about, and poisoning the neighbourhood.

We hear a great deal of the Smoke of London, and the destructive effects on property, do we not put down to the Smoke a good deal of the work done by the Dust ?

I wonder if any one has attempted to reckon the amount of Labour expended upon cleaning Furniture ? What is the amount of Physical Power wasted in useless and recurring Toil ? Remember that there need be no Street-dust ; that no particle could float in the air were the Streets properly watered.

I believe the Water Carts of to-day are the same as those of our Childhood :

They look as if they were of an earlier Century: seldom at work; always in the way; the Contractors unwatched; allowed to choose their own time, and laughing at their employers, who in turn laugh at the Ratepayers.

A wise and good man, whose loss in all its immensity we have yet to appreciate; a loss at present felt by the Few, but which will ultimately be known to the Many; whose hand in the troublous Future will be often longed for; told us a few years ago that Constitutional Government was on its trial; that the system of rational Liberty in this Country was being compared, by all thinking men, with the exact, and close working machinery of Despotism; the quietly removable Premiership of BRITAIN, with the Autocracies of EUROPE; and the

four years' incubus of AMERICA: What must be the effect of the State of LONDON on such minds?

Can our filthy Streets, our miserable Lighting, our constantly recurring Typhus, the admitted result of bad Rule, and Neglect, be anything but an argument against Constitutional Government?

I do not believe that a Despotic Government need be so superior in these matters to a Constitutional.

I believe that "the price we pay for our liberty," is merely the excuse of those, who are too idle and too apathetic to endeavour to mend matters.

I wish to deal in perfect fairness with the State of Things: it would be easy to give satirical descriptions of Vestry Meetings; and to point out peculiarities of diction,

resulting, partly, from deficient Education : I believe the cause of LONDON REFORM needs no such advocacy. I am willing to let facts speak for themselves : I am willing to admit that, in a few Parishes, efforts are made to keep decency in their limits ; but generally the rule of present Authorities is quite ineffective.

By the Act of 1855,\* which constituted the present System of LONDON the Parochial Plan was only modified ; and although several Parishes were combined for Representation, the result has not changed the Type of those who are returned to Vestries ; the condition of LONDON as regards Paving, Lighting, and Cleansing, is worse than before.

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\* I observe that some Vestrymen speak of this Act as their birth-right.

I believe that general dissatisfaction prevails regarding the condition of London, and that a desire for Reform is felt by all those, who do not dread loss to themselves, by the alteration of the State of Things.

The Act of 1855 was an attempt: a simple Form to be ultimately developed: Works have been done by the Metropolitan Board, that might have remained unaccomplished for years, but I do not consider, nor, what is more important, does the Public consider, that these Gentlemen are fully qualified to hold such vast Patronage, and controul, and spend such gigantic sums, as a general management of London would place in their hands; they are TRILOBITES, and must give place to a higher order of creation.

I believe that the British have great

power of Organization; probably more than any other people: a striking example of this was the Exhibition of 1851, a most brilliant success, but an organization for a time, however successful, must not mislead us.

So long as the zest of novelty, and the powerful stimulus of Public Attention exist, Administration will be well carried on; but in a case of permanent work, when hard labour of business, for many hours a day, accounts to be kept, expenditure watched, work inspected, and all this year after year, without the Public even knowing it, it is not to be expected of Human Nature that any one will perform this for a long time, unless he receives compensation in some shape.

It may be said that, in the case of the

House of Commons, the Members devote their time and attention to matters of general interest, without fee, or reward; It is impossible to compare that marvellous Assembly with any other: their Spirit, Patience, Humour, and wondrous Collective Sagacity, are unrivalled.

Never can we hope to contrive a Council, from which the baneful Spirit of Fogeyism is so banished, as from this; In which thorough earnestness, and intense acuteness, are brought to the surface, with the sportiveness of Schoolboys: and whose clamour, when wildest to the uninitiated, shows the precise, and critical appreciation of a weakness, which might cost the cloistered student hours to detect. This combination for a patriotic purpose of men of every variety of age, social position, character,

wealth, political views, and interests, is and must remain unapproached.\*

The sense of governing the most powerful Empire in the World should be, and is, sufficient reward for the great majority of

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\* With

“The general pique all Blockheads have for Brains,” some who have never been within the walls of Parliament have attempted feeble sneers at the House of Commons: I remember Sir JAMES GRAHAM saying when asked if he felt nervous when rising to address the House: “How can any one not be so, knowing that he speaks to the most august Assembly the World has ever seen?”

The keen sense of Humour, the sure sister of refined Wisdom, is most remarkable. I have heard an equivocal word taken up by 400 minds almost before the sound has left the orator’s mouth.

How exquisite is the collective taste of the House! no one can offend this unpunished.

To hear some persons disparage the jocularity of that wondrous aggregate, one exclaims with the Greek Philosopher, “We must be serious! here comes a fool.”



Members of Parliament; but here we see the Executive paid, the Chairman of Committees paid, and other Functionaries of whom continuous labour in private or public is required.\*

As regards the gratuitous services of Aldermen, Pride, Pomp, and Circumstance,

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\* The efforts of Foreign Countries to keep going Constitutional Forms are painfully ludicrous: they seem ignorant of the fact that the reason of our success is, not that our Theory is perfect, but that the classes who ultimately hold Power, namely, the Lords and Commons, are above Corruption.

A Garter or Lord Lieutenancy may tempt a few: and a longing for preferment may make the Representative of the People incline an ear to the insidious promises of the "whipper-in;" but to all intents and purposes the members of both Houses are pure, if for no other reason, that they have already all they want, and that wealth and social position abound. You must approach this state of things if you wish LONDON to be well governed.

and the delights of the Table may be assumed as some equivalent for the work of Government.

No Schoolboy but what knows the story, two thousand years old before JOE MILLER died, of the man who taught his horse to live without food, and the result ; so with work ; if the work of LONDON is to be well done, it must be paid for ; do not let us suppose it will be done for nothing : if you do not give Pay, you will be mulcted very heavily in the shape of Jobbing : it will be far better to select good men to do your work, and pay them liberally. Remember nine hundred millions is the lowest estimate of your property, a few thousands a year to manage it is not such very bad economy.

The proposed Government of LONDON must spring from the present State of

Things: LONDON is now a Democracy; it is the Question how to organize this Democracy.

The term Centralization is used to frighten the unknowing multitude; it has no defined meaning: all Government is Centralization: without Centralization every Street should govern itself; every Household; every Individual; the rule of the Laws is Centralization: It is all a question of Degree: Society has found that an organized Centralization with due protection for the Governed is the true Liberty. The Constitution I propose is Democratic: LONDON must be so treated.

I should not wish to apply the same principles to the State; for we should thereby sacrifice what has taken Centuries to build up; and drop the Substance for the Shadow.

I look upon LONDON at present as an aggregate of Individuals, unorganized and to be treated accordingly.

The Government I propose for the Metropolis is this :

To take the Parliamentary division of Boroughs as at present existing ; the increasing Districts to be gradually absorbed.

Each of these Boroughs should have a Common, or Lower Council, elected by the Ratepayers.

No Qualification should be required.

The term of holding a seat two years.

And an Upper Council, to sit in which, no qualification should be required, but the Electors should be persons rated at not less than £100 a-year to the Poor.

The members to hold their seats for five years.

The voting by papers and, as in the case of Parochial officers at present, cumulative.

These Councils should legislate in Local matters, and should appoint Local executive Functionaries.

Each of these Local Councils should send to a Chief Council two members, who would form a body of men of position, and eminence, in the State.

The Members of the Chief Council would be at the Head of the various Departments for general purposes.

They would be Chairmen of the subordinate Councils, not necessarily each of his own.

They should be paid ; and their Secretary should sit in the House of Commons.

Their Staff need not be numerous, but highly effective ; and they should exercise a

strict supervision on neglect, and mismanagement in the Boroughs of LONDON.

Their term of Office ten years, and to be re-eligible.

The head of the Confederation should be the LORD MAYOR ; to be chosen by the Chief Council by lot ; to hold his high Office two years, and not to be re-eligible at any time.\*

He should receive a handsome Income ;

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\* The Tradition of the Dignity of MAYORS seems undying ; from the time of the Rois Fainèans a MAYOR has occupied a place in the great heart of mankind.

I may note a circumstance of actual occurrence within two years : At a Table d'hôte at BAGNÈRES in the PYRENEES, a very intelligent Priest took the greatest interest in the details of the government of ENGLAND, and asked shrewd, and logical questions : I was much surprised, however, when with a look of conscious knowledge he said, " PALMERSTON a été deux fois Lord Maire, n'est-ce pas ? "

and in case of not already possessing a title, the Crown would probably confer on him an hereditary Dignity.

All measures affecting the General Interests of London would pass through this Chamber.

I believe that this Chief Council would possess a most valuable quality in Free Government, Publicity: it is not worth the while of the newspapers to publish the debates of Local Vestries, and the Rate-payers are too much occupied to attend the meetings to listen; but in a select body of able men\* Public Questions would be discussed with an intelligence, that would be worth reading,† and London District News-

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\* Capable of looking beyond "the ignorant present."

† We may even hope that young men may enter

papers would find good materials for their columns.

The Council should, however, retain the power, possessed by the House of Commons, of entertaining questions with closed doors if it should appear desirable.

At present the condition of a Bill,

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these Councils, and that fifty years of age will not be required of a man before he begins to learn the Science of Politics—"that noble Science of Politics which of all "Sciences is the most important to the welfare of "Nations; which of all Sciences most tends to expand "and invigorate the mind; which draws nutriment, "and ornament from every part of Philosophy and "Literature, and dispenses in return nutriment, and "ornament to all."

I believe this plan is suited to the self-governing spirit of our nation, and according to the soundest theories of Philosophic writers.

"Placet enim esse quiddam in republicâ præstans et regale; esse aliud auctoritate principum partum ac tributum; esse quasdam res servatas iudicio voluntatique multitudinis."—*Cicero, de Republicâ.*



affecting the interest of LONDON, is most precarious; there happen at this moment to be three Members of the House of Commons, who are members of the Central Board of Works, but an accident may happen in the best regulated constituencies; and if these three casual representatives lost their seats, there would be no one to introduce a bill, nor to guide its steps through the mazes of Parliament. The practice which has been attempted of asking questions of these members, relating to business before the Central Board, is quite irregular, and against the Rules of the House of Commons.

Parliament is impatient, and with justice, of questions affecting LONDON: Instead of a body of men, united in their views of Metropolitan Questions, we have every

sort of difference; *quot homines tot sententiæ*; and the time of the Country is taken up by Questions that should be decided elsewhere: Would this occur, if the Secretary to the Chief Council had the Charge of Bills affecting LONDON? Would not this Functionary well earn his pay?

Would he not, in introducing a Bill agreed to by the Municipal Authorities, have a most powerful argument for Parliamentary Sanction? It is known that a Bill has but small chance of becoming an Act, unless some member takes a constant, and persevering interest in it; and this cannot be expected of unofficial members.

The Head of the Metropolitan municipality would, as now, entertain the Sovereign, the Princes of this Country, and Foreign Potentates, as it is desirable, for

every reason, to continue this practice ; and the Chief Official should receive an income amply sufficient for the purpose, and for State Uses, and Dignity : “ *Tenez bonne table, et soignez les femmes,*” is as sound advice to Governors now, as when NAPOLEON gave it : It was said by a Statesman, and a Wit, that the proper Government of IRELAND would be a Despotism tempered by good Dinners : I believe the British practice of dining on business is a most wise one, and in an Election, or an Empire produces admirable effects.

One obstacle, suggested against a Scheme of this kind, is the probable opposition of the CITY ; should this be insuperable, I am for organizing LONDON outside the walls, in the manner described, placing the High Steward of WESTMINSTER, or his Deputy, at the head of the Federation ; and I be-

lieve that in time the absorption of the CITY would take place.

Before that end, LONDON would be ITALY without ROME; but there need be no waiting for the CITY, should that Corporation refuse to take the lead, and place itself at the head of an enlightened Reform.

As regards the contempt at the present time affected for the Insignia of Power, I have always observed them most eagerly clutched by those who have denounced them, when out of reach, as the gew-gaws of office: I believe that the LORD MAYOR, and his subordinate, the LORD CHIEF JUSTICE, on the judgement seat, more fitly represent their High Offices, and the Dignity of their Country, than if they lounged on rocking chairs, and were furnished with cheroots, and a spittoon.

The Pride, Pomp, and Circumstance of Authority should be preserved, and in a manner worthy of this great Community.

I believe that the effect of a Municipal Government in LONDON outside the walls, well contrived, and energetically carried out, would be very great; and that this would be a far better method of inducing the vested Interests of the CITY to head a new Federation, than attempting at present to storm the citadel, or make terms with the besieged.

At present *may* is the word in London laws: I would change it to *must*.

Opposition may of course be expected from those holding vested interests; but we have seen measures carried, when the opponents were much more powerful.

History has shown us, within a Century,

the annexation of a Kingdom, and the annihilation of a Parliament surrounded by the outworks of Prescription, Patronage, and Power.

Not many years past the Government of this great Empire was wrested from the hands of a puissant Aristocracy, by a vote of the House of Commons: and it has been proposed to take power from Middle Class, and deposit it in the Lower: surely these are greater measures than London Reform!

In the case of the Act of 1832, it was denied by few that the old System worked well; yet it was abolished; how can we wisely retain a method that is admitted to work abominably?

The Union of IRELAND to GREAT BRITAIN was carried out by an energetic

Minister ; and the reform of LONDON calls for a determined Statesman.

Would that this cause might enlist the ability of men willing to turn their energies to a practical, and much wanted Reform ; one of which they may live to see the fruits ; and one which would give real, tangible good, to their fellow subjects.

In this, as in every system, great allowance must of course be made for friction ; to diminish this, the oil of good sense which exists in all British institutions must abound.

I hold myself by no means bound to this scheme : I would sooner sacrifice a great deal of it, than see LONDON continue in its present neglected state.

I would, so far as possible, not meddle with existing Interests.

I am decidedly opposed to an elected Magistracy: I believe it to be unsuited to the Spirit of the British People; and to have the greatest practical disadvantages.

Can there be a doubt that the natural cure, and prevention of vicious tendency is to give the Mind and Body an innocent stimulus? Would the gin shop be so crowded, if a walk in the fields were possible to the jaded Artisan? Why is the Public House preferred to the Family Circle? because Light, Warmth, and the spur of Society, are there: we admit all this, and yet sit quiet, while, one after another, every morsel of suburban Common, and Forest land disappear.

I believe that unless some competent Individual is in the House of Commons, thoroughly prepared to watch the interests



of the Metropolis, encroachment after encroachment will be made, until the public property of LONDON and its neighbourhood will disappear.

This matter is of immediate importance : HAINAULT FOREST in 1851 was an almost perfect specimen of the Old Woods of ENGLAND. About ten times the size of HYDE PARK, and with some 100,000 venerable Oaks upon it: centuries of wild growth had made as lovely a retreat for tired labour, as can be conceived: it might have been a thousand miles from a Town; and yet it was of easy access: Where is HAINAULT FOREST now? not a trace remains. Brick walls, mud banks, and pretentious houses, are the actual monuments of the Avarice of Officials, and their utter neglect of Public Enjoyment. Precisely

£3,500 a year has been added by this transaction to the Revenue of the Country, a splendid addition to 70 millions!

The House of Commons is naturally unwilling to occupy the time of the Country in discussing measures of the Government of LONDON.

LONDON ought to be self-governed ; and the Government of LONDON should be armed by the Legislature with powers such as would render frequent appeals to Parliament unnecessary.

I believe that the time of the Chief Council, and of their Secretary, would be most fully occupied, and that LONDON would soon bear the marks of intelligent and energetic action.

The Londoners are and ought to be proud of their town : grand in dimensions

and order : a noble form clothed in squalid rags.\*

The Population of LONDON deserve this

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\* DISRAELI in one of those admirable socio-philosophical aphorisms sprinkled over his Works calls " the only real monarch a man in chambers : " is not this the LONDONER ? self-respecting, and respecting others, feeling that the great City is his own, and loving his dominion.

It is not when we come ashore at DOVER, among the staring, dowdy crowd, that we feel our Empire ; no, it is when we step out on the platform in LONDON ; then our Reign begins.

On the other side the Channel we knew we were Servants ; here we feel we are Masters.

Who does not feel elasticity of heart when approaching LONDON ?

Calumny, the sure follower of Greatness, has declared the air of LONDON insalubrious ; I believe the natural climate of LONDON to be excellent.

Ignorant strangers have mocked at the mysterious robe, which covers the Mighty Mother : to the eyes of the true-hearted Londoner 'tis like the sceptered pall of saffron, which drapes the almost Divine Inspiration of Sir Joshua.

Care; their quiet is admirable: we know that great distress exists; more than in any Capital; is there one where there is so much patient submission?\*

What a monument of glory are those numerals "MDCCCXLVIII" on the front of BUCKINGHAM PALACE!

When I brought forward this subject in the House of Commons, last year, there was not one word said in dispute of the facts: a circumstance almost unparalleled. Sir GEORGE GREY applied subsequently to the Central Board to know their opinion of my Speech, and a debate in their Chamber of some hours upon it took place.

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\* We hear of the vices of the Great City; and people talk glibly of the Innocence of the Country: Spend a day, my Superficial Friend, at the Old Bailey, and then go to the Assize Court in your County Town: and reconsider your opinion.

It is true that they were asked their opinion of the Vestry Boards, their constituents, and but one view could be expected of them.

As regards placing in the hands of the Central Board the Paving, Lighting, and Cleansing, it may possibly be a move in the right direction ; but I accepted Sir GEORGE GREY's reply only in the sense of his considering it desirable to remove power from the Vestries.\*

The Money voluntarily expended on Public Charities exceeds the Revenue of many Continental States: I believe the amount of "Goodwill towards Men" in LONDON is in excess of the want ; Surely this calls for Organization.†

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\* See *Hansard*.

† Persons from the Country talk of the sad ble-

I wish to call Public Opinion to act upon London Legislation : I wish Public Opinion to be the watchful Guardian of London Government.\*

I have avoided a cumbersome mass of Statistics ; knowing how repulsive they are.

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mishes, which shock them in LONDON. My Friend, pray remember that every Speck, almost without exception, comes from the Country.

LONDON uses the facility which the Country makes.

\* When I speak of Public Opinion, I do not mean the opinion of the day ; I do not mean the opinion of those, who hail a man one year the saviour of EUROPE ; another smash his windows ; and another turn out in millions to reverence his Funeral : nor the opinion of those, who one month damn a man as a Murderer, and the next crown him as a Martyr ; I mean by PUBLIC OPINION, the deliberate and ultimate Judgement of Humanity, what the Great Philosopher speaking of final judgement on Poetry, calls the "Common Sense of Mankind," the real "*Vox Populi*," the real "*Vox Dei*."

I have written plain words to plain men :  
I wish this Appeal to be read by those,  
whose loss or gain is in the matter.

Few can know LONDON long, and not  
take an interest in the fortunes of the great  
City ; the home of True, Rational, and  
Enlightened Liberty ; the scene of such  
heart-stirring events ; the Theatre, where  
has been enacted for centuries so great an  
historical Drama.

Let us not be dismayed by the vastness  
of LONDON ; nor suppose that there is any-  
thing that British Energy cannot accom-  
plish : Remember what our Arch-Enemy,  
Napoleon I, said, “ With an Army of  
BRITISH I could conquer the World.”

Shall the people who have won and kept  
an Empire, on which the Sun never sets ;  
who rule, with undisputed sway, Millions

upon Millions of their Fellow men, admit that the regulation of their own Capital is beyond their power? that they can govern with enlightenment nations of almost every race, but cannot make their own home habitable? That, superior in dominion to the pagan races of EGYPT, GREECE, and ROME, they are ready to acknowledge an apathetic inferiority, in the essentials of Life to the Nations of Antiquity?

To make LONDON the City of Cities, as SHAKESPEARE to Thought, as MICHAEL ANGELO to Art; to let her Memory be, for myriads of Centuries, the Monument of Municipal Government; her Starvation relieved; her internal Economy perfect; her condition salubrious; her Liberty sacred; is probably the dream of an Enthusiast: it is not likely to be accomplished in a Gene-



ration, which believes itself Practical, because it has banished the Spirit of Chivalry.

In writing these plain words to plain men I have had no fantastic vision of Perfection before my eyes: but I have long felt that the state of LONDON is disgraceful to all possessing Power.

To the attempt to remedy Theoretical Evils there is no limit; not so the Practical.

I believe that the present Rulers of LONDON, the Parochial Vestries have, after a fair trial of ten years, utterly failed in their Government.

I believe that great improvement is possible.

I have not aimed at a system such as  
 "Some faultless monster whom the World ne'er saw,"  
 but I am not of those, who have inhaled

the base and insidious spirit, which whispers to their hearts, "It will last our time," and bids them sit in apathy, and indolence while all that is sacred, and great is gradually but effectually swept away.



## APPENDIX.

FROM THE TIMES, JUNE 15, 1865.

EVERYBODY remembers the story of the man who, when he alone sate unmoved in the church during the delivery of a most pathetic sermon, explained his unconcern by stating that he "belonged to another parish." The idea was thought ludicrous enough to find a place in most of our national jest-books, but if it is an absurdity it is one which is most consistently observed. Our whole public existence is more "parochial" than anything else. We live by parishes, and think by parishes, and feel by parishes, and pay by parishes, and save by parishes, and quarrel by parishes. Talk of the jealousies of Italian municipalities, indeed, why, they are nothing to the enmities of parochial Boards. Scots and English have become friends, and the fights of the Border are mere matters of minstrelsy, but the feuds

of conterminous parishes are as fierce as ever. If an Englishman's house is his castle, his parish is his world. Its bounds, though invisible, are more impassable than Devil's Dikes and more enduring than Giants' Causeways. No parishioner will step out of them or allow a strange parishioner to step in. M. GUIZOT, after long thought, and the exercise of that generalization and analysis by which his countrymen are distinguished, decided that the unit or "molecule" of mediæval society was the feudal castle, with its lord and lady, its household and retainers, and its cluster of vassals outside its walls. That may have been so on the Continent, but not in England. Our "molecule" was indubitably the parish church; in fact, it is so still. In every one of these ancient edifices there is a little apartment in which the priest's robes were kept,—thence called the vestry. That word and that room rule us to this very hour. To the parish church the parishioners repaired, and in that half secular part of it which would be least desecrated by the work, they transacted the business of social life. The same is done at this present time. London, with the exception of its drains, is still governed by "vestries," and it was their rule or misrule

which called up SIR WILLIAM FRASER in the House of Commons on Tuesday evening.

SIR WILLIAM gave utterance to the griefs of the whole metropolitan public. London is badly lighted, miserably paved, and, except underground, not cleansed at all. In snow time—such as SIR WILLIAM thinks we shall now have every winter—you walk ankle-deep in a mixture of ice and dirt of the consistency of a French *sorbet*. In summer time, if you are not choked with dust, you are smothered with an artificial mud. In spring and autumn you slip and slide over a marvellous paste compounded of rain-water, powdered granite, and filth. A short time ago an ingenious correspondent sent us a calculation of the waste of muscular power produced by walking under such difficulties, and of the probable amount of bronchitis and catarrh due to the exhalations from the half-frozen slush under our feet. As to the paving, SIR WILLIAM “had seen streets in which there were five different descriptions” of work. Even in aristocratic St. James’s-street each side has its own peculiar fashion. MR. HANKEY capped even these stories, for he knew of a case in which “one half of a street was four inches higher than the

“other half, and great danger to horses occurred.” All this, of course, means that there are so many parochial Boards each taking its own way. Indeed, a parish is not always at one within itself. SIR WILLIAM “knew as a fact,” that in a certain parish, containing two leading thoroughfares, the vestrymen inhabiting one were resolutely opposed to any improvement in the other, as likely to diminish the relative advantages of their own. Parishes may divide your very house, or a bridge, or a brook, and there is no help for it. In fact, we are sorry to say that we do not see what help is to come even of SIR WILLIAM FRASER’S motion, though every speaker who followed supported him, and the HOME SECRETARY could not gainsay the arguments.

The difficulty of course is the everlasting difficulty—the alternative. If the vestries are not to do for us, who is? “The Metropolitan Board,” says MR. TITE. Yes; but that Board was expressly shut out of the job at its very formation, “from the regard,” as SIR GEORGE GREY observed, “of the Legislature for the cherished “principles of local self-government.” We made over our sewers to the new Board, but the fear of centralization would not allow us to go any

further, and “the lighting, paving, and cleansing of the streets were left to the parishes and the vestries.” Even SIR WILLIAM FRASER did not seem above half inclined to accept SIR JOHN THWAITES as our governor-general for good and all. He rather preferred dealing with London as MR. BRIGHT would have dealt with India—splitting it up into small Presidencies, and establishing so many centres of Government. But we doubt whether many people would be as willing as SIR WILLIAM to see “five or six corporations in London.” One seems pretty well enough for us. That the City has become the equivalent of a province is true. It contains a larger population than Saxony or Switzerland, and it is rapidly increasing in extent. Its wealth is beyond all calculation. Its yield of taxes is prodigious. All this is true, but we do not think the place too large for one Government. Six Governments would be better than six hundred, no doubt, but we think the Metropolitan Board, with a comprehensive jurisdiction, would be better still.

SIR WILLIAM FRASER had asked for a Royal Commission of Inquiry, but, for a wonder, everybody acknowledged on this occasion that there



was nothing to be learnt. SIR GEORGE GREY observed that "they knew all the facts" already, and so, when MR. TITE said there would be no use in a commission, nobody could contradict him. In the end it came to this—that the HOME SECRETARY recognized an extension of the powers of the Metropolitan Board as "the real "remedy," and admitted that, while uniformity of administration, and therefore practical improvement, would result from the change, it did not follow that there must be increase of expense. For all this, however, he gave us very little prospect of the actual reform. He thought the subject "well entitled to consideration," but he did not say when it would be considered. Indeed, he prefaced his remarks with the ominous observation that it was a subject of "some difficulty." But where does the impediment lie? If we can get this great City made, as SIR WILLIAM FRASER expressed it, "a decent "place for folks to live in" without paying anything for the improvement, why should we not enjoy the advantage? What is the "difficulty?" It is the difficulty which has just shattered the American Union—State Rights.

Our counties don't set up for themselves, but

our parishes do. They are the "States" of our body politic, ready to confederate against any Federal reform. They have outlived all other local powers. There is nothing in the Desert itself or in the Arabian race to beat a vestry for vitality. Those gentlemen who now exercise their authority over the pavements and lamp-posts and thoroughfares of the metropolis will not resign that authority without a fight. They will do battle for all their ancient powers, privileges, and functions, especially for the power of the purse. They will distrust—not entirely without reason—the promises of economy. They will expect their rates to be increased the minute the control passes out of their hands, and the ratepayers will be very likely to share their opinion. But against vestrymen and ratepayers who shall fight? Nobody pretends to be satisfied with things as they are, but this dissatisfaction is only a short step towards change. However, we have this in our favour, that there is an actually existing authority, representative in character, and not wholly unapproved, to which the charge can be transferred. The Metropolitan Board is willing to accept all this work at once, and to do it well.

That is a great point gained, and, for ourselves, we are certainly not afraid to trust it with the management of the streets as well as the management of the sewers.

FROM THE DAILY NEWS, JUNE 16, 1865.

OBVIOUSLY the motion, as it stood on the Notice paper, was but a vehicle, but as a vehicle it was well employed to convey some strong and sensible remarks on the distracted and disordered condition of London gas-lamps, London drains, and London streets. SIR WILLIAM FRASER asks any member of the House, or even "the humblest member of the community," whether this prodigious capital of the mightiest empire the world has ever seen is even decently lighted, paved, or cleansed? SIR WILLIAM, who knows the highways and bye-ways by heart, asks honourable members to consider the state of St. James's-street, Pall-mall, and the Strand; to look at the reeling gas-lamps, with their sickly yellow splutter of flame; to drive or even walk along a broad aristocratic street, one

side of which is macadamized and the other paved, or along a great central thoroughfare which perhaps is some inches higher at one end than at the other, or is paved in patches, or sinking into holes where it ceases to be paved, or broken up into rough heaps of stone. He refers to a district, without naming it, where one street is kept almost impassable in order that business in the next may not suffer by a diversion of the traffic. He denounces the raging sea of slush which makes a quagmire in the winter months, and the plague of dust which makes a Sahara in the summer, a Sahara which the intermittent water-cart capriciously converts into a morass. He asks travelled members whether any capital in Europe is worse lighted, worse paved, or worse cleansed than our own, with all its enormous local taxation and its wealthy Board of Works. There is, perhaps, as MR. HANKEY suggested, a little exaggeration in supposing every capital in Europe to be superior to London in all these things. But the author of this motion had designedly, as he afterwards explained, denied himself the easy advantage of contrasting London with Imperial Paris. All the world knows that NAPOLEON III. has

done for Paris what SIR WILLIAM FRASER tells us OCTAVIUS did for Rome, and we cannot hope to do for London. He has made it the city of pleasure for all nations. We, who are content that London should be something less than a city of pleasure while it is so much more, and who admire Imperial Paris without envying or desiring to emulate it, acknowledge the sound and liberal discretion which prompted SIR WILLIAM FRASER to abstain wholly on Tuesday evening from that *banal* homage to the genius of the Second Empire, in which so many of our staring and open-mouthed countrymen indulge when they come back to this mean and dingy capital from the interminable glaring façades of the Parisian boulevards. Whatever may be his private opinion of the magnificent results of modern Cæsarism, he pointedly disclaims the ideal of a beneficent and enlightened autocracy for London. He would not, we daresay, speak of Paris as the "whited sepulchre of liberty." Possibly enough he admires this brilliant creation of M. HAUSSMANN. But he is too good an Englishman not to know the price at which these things are done in France, or to be willing to pay such a price for the finest gas-lamps, the most perfect

organization of watering-carts, and the most indefatigable scavengers in Europe. He knows that many wise and good Frenchmen would be content with some of the disadvantages of dingy London if they could import a little London liberty into brilliant Paris. They think that it is not enough for France that its capital should be the city of pleasure for the world. There are even good Parisians, as every general election certifies, who would be glad to have a voice and a vote in the management of their own affairs, though they should dispense with the aspiring genius and the fertile resources of a Prefect, and the financial devotedness of a Municipal Council, appointed by the EMPEROR. M. EMILE DE GIRARDIN would, as he calls it, "HAUSS-MANNIZE" all France by a system of enormous loans and everlasting reconstructions. But the electors of Paris, and the whole liberal opposition throughout the country, when they ask for more light, for less mud and dust, and for the "crowning of the edifice," mean something more and better—*altiora quædam et magnificentiora*—than is dreamt of in the municipal philosophy of the Prefect of the Seine.

Is it, then, impossible for free Englishmen,

who inhabit *ce pays de Londres*, to combine all the comforts and conveniences of the latest civilization with their own immemorial rights and liberties ; with the principles of self-government and responsibility to Parliament ? SIR WILLIAM FRASER thinks not ; and we must say his searching criticisms and his declared objects are all the more deserving of public confidence and respect, that they are thoroughly national in feeling, and not like the loose impressions of one of those continental idlers who are Englishmen in France and Frenchmen in England. SIR WILLIAM modestly declines to make definite proposals. He seems to think that each metropolitan borough might have a corporation of its own, comprised of ratepayers influential and intelligent enough to overawe and control the petty selfishness of local hucksters and jobbers, and to perform efficiently the duties of *Ædiles* within the compass of their local jurisdiction, without impairing the authority of the central government. SIR WILLIAM'S idea is not of one great central municipal authority, but rather of five or six corporations independent of each other, controlled in some sort by a central board, and represented by a responsible member in the House of Commons. We are



not quite sure to what extent he would be prepared to extend the authority of the present Board of Works—whether in fact, he would constitute *that* the central municipal authority. At all events, he insists on responsibility to Parliament. He evidently holds that the lighting, paving, and cleansing of London is as much a matter of imperial concern, as the sums contributed to the national exchequer from the local taxation of the metropolis.

In these views, with much that is empirical and indeterminate, there is also much that solicits and deserves attention, and in a future Parliament will probably demand it. But a Royal Commission, as the HOME SECRETARY observed, could discover nothing; it could but elicit and embody in a Report the helplessness of the public, the scandals of local legislatures, the poverty and the pettiness of the parochial mind. Perhaps SIR WILLIAM FRASER is nearer to his purpose when he looks for the germ of a new London in a reconstructed Board of Works, responsible to the House of Commons.



FROM THE SUN, JUNE 14, 1865.

SIR W. FRASER called attention last night to the state of the metropolis as regarded the paving, lighting, and cleansing. In this he was fully justified, and his remarks on the subject were very pertinent. Great improvement might with advantage be made in this respect, and it seems strange that so little attention has been paid to the matter before now. SIR W. FRASER referred more particularly to the government of the districts of the metropolis by district Boards. The local Boards have the paving, cleansing, and lighting of the metropolis entirely in their hands. Nothing could better have explained the necessity that exists for some change in this matter than the circumstance cited by the honourable baronet, that St. James's-street had one kind of pavement on one side and a different kind on the other. When people sought the cause of this anomaly, they were told that one side of the street was in one parish and the other in another parish quite distinct. This management is carried so far that in some cases it is possible to find streets in which there are

five different descriptions of paving ; and in one parish, where there are two leading thoroughfares, the vestrymen belonging to one are opposed to any improvement in the other, because they say that it would injure the traffic and custom of their own street. Surely a condition of things that allows such freaks and fancies to take place ought to be altered as speedily as possible. It is always a pity when anything that materially affects the welfare of the community is placed in the hands of a few prejudiced and partial persons, instead of being entrusted to the direction of those who are above petty considerations and not influenced by selfish motives. SIR W. FRASER also called the attention of the house to the manner in which the lighting of London was managed. The gas supplied was of the worst description, and the other arrangements were also incomplete and imperfect. As for the cleansing of the metropolis that also requires alteration, for this is left in the hands of the local Board. Last winter there was a considerable fall of rain and snow, and yet no effort was made to remove the slush. Now that we have dry weather, the dust renders the streets almost intolerable to foot passengers. This dust

is very injurious to those who imbibe it, which should certainly be an additional incentive to those who have authority to do all in their power to remove the great nuisance. SIR W. FRASER truly said that London was unlike any other city of ancient or modern times, for no others had their inhabitants so closely packed together. Many must agree with the honourable baronet in his desire to see this great capital of our country improved. We should emulate the Roman EMPEROR who boasted that he had beautified his metropolis; though we could not hope to do for London what OCTAVIUS did for Rome.

FROM THE GLOBE, JUNE 14, 1865.

**I**F Englishmen could be guilty of the slightest amount of disloyalty, and for a moment harbour the thought that any foreign prince or potentate ought to have jurisdiction within this realm, their ideas would point to admitting the French Emperor as a kind of Metropolitan Ædile, and making him supreme over the buildings,

streets, and shows of London for two or three years. If they were also to entertain such a constitutional heresy they would probably say that our municipal and parochial representative institutions were on their trial. The condition of our public ways is indeed disgraceful, and London owes its thanks to SIR WILLIAM FRASER for bringing forward the subject, and eliciting influential opinions upon it in the House of Commons last night. We did a great deal in the way of reform when the Metropolitan Board of Works was formed. Without exactly violating the representative principle, a body was constituted having a general jurisdiction over the metropolis in certain matters, and during the seven or eight years that that body has been in existence it has fairly fulfilled expectation and accomplished great works tending to the health and convenience of the inhabitants of London. But there are certain things the proper regulation of which deeply affects the comfort of the public, respecting which the Metropolitan Board of Works is powerless. The proper lighting, paving, and cleansing of the streets still continues to form a part of the parochial functions. The consequence is that

there is an entire want of uniformity in the arrangements. As an illustration of this SIR WILLIAM FRASER mentioned one or two instances in the course of his remarks last night. He said :—" On one side of St. James's-street there " was one sort of pavement, while upon the " other side the paving was quite different. When " the cause of so anomalous a state of things " was sought to be ascertained it was found to " be attributable to the fact that one part of the " street was in one parish, the other in a parish " wholly distinct. He had seen streets in which " there were five different descriptions of paving. " There was a parish in which there were two " great leading thoroughfares which he would " distinguish by calling them A and B, and he " knew as a fact that vestrymen inhabiting B " were opposed to the improvement of A street, " on the ground that if it were improved the " traffic and custom of their own street would " be diminished." The only point on which adjoining parishes agree to be harmonious is the insufficient discharge of their duty, and in this respect their unanimity is wonderful. As SIR WILLIAM FRASER pointed out, the best parts of the town are those in which the arrangements are the worst. We lately had an instance of this.

The parish of St. James's, taking pity on the inhabitants of Piccadilly, who were deafened by the constant clang on the paved thoroughfare, resolved to substitute macadamised roadway. They did so, and the relief has been great, while as yet there is no reason to suppose that the new substance will not stand the wear and tear of the traffic for a reasonable time. But the jurisdiction of St. James's parish ends with the top of St. James's-street. The remainder of Piccadilly westward, that is to say the portion which is more devoted to residence and less to business, is in the parish of St. George, and the unhappy aristocrats who look upon the Green Park are doomed to a constant rattle, painful to the ear. Why cannot the rich parish of St. George follow the example of its neighbour, and make life more endurable in one of its principal thoroughfares? In another respect the parochial authorities must take a lesson from experience. All new streets to be constructed hereafter are to have subways, that is to say, passages underneath for the gas and water pipes, and giving ample room for repairs without disturbing the surface of the street. This is a very excellent improvement in itself, and as it becomes more extensively supplied it will obviate many of the inconveniences of which

we now have reason to complain. But the experience of the new street in Covent-garden shows that the subway creates a hollow sound, greatly intensifying the noise occasioned by the passage of vehicles, and where there are subways there must be some softer and smoother surface, at least not worse than a macadamised roadway for the traffic overhead—that is to say, if the inhabitants are expected to hear each other's voices without shouting like a strepitous basso in one of Verdi's operas. We want our streets less noisy, better lighted, better watered in summer, and cleaned in winter ; we want an abolition, or, at least, a mitigation, of that constant blockade which is established somewhere or other, and which is always encountered when there is but just time to catch a train or keep some important engagement ; we want an uniformity of arrangement so as not to have the two sides of St. James's-street as if each were under a different Sovereign, Parliament, and laws. We may hope that the discussion raised by SIR WILLIAM FRASER last night will hasten the realisation of our reasonable and just wishes in this respect. We do not think, indeed, that the appointment of a commission would do much good.

We know as much of the evil as a commission could tell us, and the remedy is one which must be devised by the Executive on its own responsibility, and carried out by Parliament. There is a precedent for the evil, and also happily for a cure. SIR GEORGE GREY admitted the evil, and said "the difficulties arose from the regard  
" of the Legislature for the cherished principle  
" of local self-government, and were very similar  
" to the inconveniences felt before the passing of  
" the new Highway Act in the management of  
" the roads by parochial authorities. The remedy provided in that case was to form many  
" parishes into a district, and to place the management of the roads under one superintending  
" body. That would be a great advantage in  
" the metropolis. The real remedy was in extending the powers of the Metropolitan Board  
" of Works, which were, he thought, very usefully exercised." New Parliaments are as famous for their activity as new brooms, and we hope that the new Parliament will do something to make the locality in which its members are destined to spend a considerable portion of the next few years at least "a decent place for folks to live in."



FROM THE EXAMINER, JUNE 17, 1865.

SIR W. FRASER has rendered a service in drawing attention to the disgraceful state of the metropolis. Half a century ago London believed itself the best cleansed, the best lighted, the best paved, the best watched capital of Europe; and comparatively it was all this, other cities being in a worse condition in all those respects. Content with this superiority, London went to sleep; and to rouse it up, and get it fairly to look at itself, is now urgently necessary. All London's old superiorities have departed from it excepting one. It is now not so clean as Paris, not so well paved, and not so well lighted, but it is better watched. The police is, indeed, the only institution adapted to the increased and increasing dimensions of the metropolis. For the rest, the lighting, paving, cleansing, there is only the old apparatus fitted to the town when it was a fourth of its present size. But let us hear SIR W. FRASER, whose account of London in the main particulars is deplorably true:—

“ Now, as to the paving, to which he wished  
“ to call the attention of the House in the first  
“ instance, he would ask any hon. member  
“ whether London was in that respect what it  
“ ought to be. *Were not, in short, the streets of*  
“ *almost every borough throughout the country better*  
“ *paved than Pallmall, St. James’s-street, or*  
“ *Piccadilly?* If so, was it not a disgrace to us  
“ that the streets of a great metropolis should be  
“ so situated? On one side of St. James’s-street  
“ there was one sort of pavement, while upon  
“ the other side the paving was quite different.  
“ When the cause of so anomalous a state of  
“ things was sought to be ascertained it was  
“ found to be attributable to the fact that one  
“ part of the street was in one parish, the other  
“ in a parish wholly distinct. He had seen  
“ streets in which there were five different de-  
“ scriptions of paving. There was a parish in  
“ which there were two great leading thorough-  
“ fares, which he would distinguish by calling  
“ them A and B, and he knew as a fact that  
“ vestrymen inhabiting B were opposed to the  
“ improvement of A street, on the ground that  
“ if it were improved the traffic and custom of  
“ their own street would be diminished. Lam-

“ beth district afforded a good illustration of his  
“ argument. Some six weeks ago he saw a street  
“ in that district leading from the Palace of the  
“ Archbishop of Canterbury, at the condition of  
“ which he was surprised. Such, then, was the  
“ state of the paving of London in the hands of  
“ the parochial authorities, and he defied any one  
“ to say that it was satisfactory. But he had also  
“ to complain of the mode in which London was  
“ lighted. *He knew of no continental town which*  
“ *was so badly off in that respect.* We had lamp-  
“ posts in the metropolis such as were used in  
“ the days of our forefathers. But, independently  
“ of that fact, he was informed that *the gas sup-*  
“ *plied was of the very worst description.* In the  
“ case of the lamp-posts, too, there would appear  
“ to be a suspension, as it were, of the laws of  
“ gravitation. Indeed, he had never seen five  
“ consecutive lamp-posts which were not out of  
“ the perpendicular, and leaning in every possible  
“ direction. On the top of those posts were  
“ lamps *which never seem to have been destined to*  
“ *light the footway.* But, passing from the  
“ lighting to the cleansing of the metropolis, he  
“ found that under the 125th section of the Act  
“ the cleansing of the streets was left in the

“ hands of the local boards. The Act had been  
“ in force for a period of ten years, but *in no*  
“ *town were the streets so disgracefully neglected*  
“ *as in London.* There were gutters in which  
“ the water would not run except when inundated  
“ by some great fall of rain. We had a consi-  
“ derable fall of both rain and snow last winter,  
“ and we probably would have in this country  
“ for many winters to come, and the result was  
“ that the streets were to be seen covered with  
“ slush and mire, which was ankle-deep on the  
“ footways. At the present moment, when dry  
“ weather prevailed, the condition of the streets,  
“ owing to the dust which was allowed to collect  
“ in them, was almost equally intolerable. It  
“ had been proved by experiment that if an  
“ ounce of this dust were mixed with a certain  
“ quantity of water a quantity of animalculæ  
“ came into existence, so that everybody who  
“ imbibed the dust took into his constitution a  
“ considerable amount of evil. Nor must the  
“ enormous amount of labour to which servants  
“ were subjected in trying to keep away the dust  
“ be lost sight of in dealing with the question.”

At the lower part of Whitehall in wet weather there is a lake, and in dry the dust of a

desert. Nowhere is there any removal of the dirt of the streets which accumulates on the footways. It becomes mud in rain, or dust under the sun, but there it remains in the one shape or the other.

And what is done for cleansing is done in the dirtiest, the foulest, the filthiest, the unhealthiest way. Throughout the day the scavengers' carts are crawling through the streets with their foul unwholesome contents, sending forth their intolerable stench and noxious effluvia, putrid vegetables and garbage in a state of decomposition. We all know how injurious a mass of this filth would be at any spot, but is it to be supposed that it is innocuous passing slowly through the streets, and shaken up by the motion of the carts? Does the air escape the pollution, and do we not all breathe what the scavengers' loads have imparted to it? There is no work which ought to be done with more despatch, and there is none performed in a more leisurely way. Scavengers and dustmen always take their time. Haste is unknown to them. Indeed they seem to spin out their jobs to the utmost, and to give to the town the fullest benefit of the air and scent of their collections. The dustmen are of

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a very social turn, and hold converse with the cooks and scullerymaids while their carts stand at the door enriching the atmosphere. The men have evidently the whole day before them, and they do their work so as to make it as dirty a business as possible, scattering odours and ordures round.

Now why is there not, as in Paris, a fixed time for the clearing of dustbins, and the removal of rotten vegetables and garbage? If there were a fixed time the work would necessarily be expedited as much as possible, instead of, as now, protracted to the utmost, dawdled over as if too much could not be made of so nasty and noxious an operation. We all know the importance of purifying the river, but it does not less concern us to preserve the air from contamination, and this is not done while all the worst refuse of an enormous capital is slowly conveyed through the streets, tainting and infecting the atmosphere under a hot sun. For a nice people we have very dirty ways. The Parisians are behind us in one essential of domestic nicety, but, on the other hand, noses in the streets of Paris are not offended throughout the day by long processions of scavengers' carts. In that beautiful and well-

regulated city there is found a time for all things, and whatever is offensive to sense and health is removed before the streets are peopled.

For the way in which offensive rubbish is removed our parishes are answerable, and we are told that proceedings may be taken against them for nuisance, under a recent act. Of course the rubbish must be removed, but the method of removing it should be arranged so as not to taint the air more than is absolutely necessary, nor indeed to offend the eye and nose. As it is, the vestries leave it to the contractors to consult only their own convenience and profit, without the slightest regard to what concerns the public.

But let it be borne in mind that what flows through the sewers is not so feculent and pernicious as what is carted through the streets, animal and vegetable refuse in a state of decomposition, and the character of the nuisance is then as plain as it is rank; and it is a scandal that it should be without remedy in a time of active sanitary reform. It is most desirable that some of our medical authorities should report on the matter, and say whether what passes away underground, and not allowed to pollute the river within a certain distance, is a jot more offensive

than the putridities openly passed through the streets from morning to night?

To parochial management we owe our wretched lighting and paving. Before the early closing of the principal shops their lights eked out the deficiency of the parochial lights; but now, after an early hour, nothing can be more dingy and dim than the aspect of the town. The lamp-posts are indeed at such intervals that the rays of one never reach its nearest neighbour, such rays being, indeed, of the weakest, from the wretched quality of the gas.

In our houses we are under the two tyrannies of the gas and water companies. For both we pay exorbitant prices for supplies of the worst quality, but the gas is the worst of the two, for we are at the mercy of the companies not only as to what they choose to give us, but what they choose to charge, their reading of their own gas-meters being absolute, and without appeal.

A gentleman who had repeatedly in vain questioned the charges of a certain company resolved upon a decisive test, and discontinued the use of gas during a whole summer quarter. What was the result? He got about the usual bill for so many hundred or thousand cubic feet of gas.



He protested, stated what he had done to try the fairness of the charges, but was coolly told that the gasometer bore witness against him, and that it never told lies.

For water, MR. CHADWICK has shown that we pay about three times as much as we ought to do, even though we get it sometimes with little fish in it, for which we have not bargained. To the poor the price of water in London is a serious sanitary evil. But we are in the bondage of companies, from which there is no present prospect of escape.

It is suggested that for the remedy of parochial mismanagement a transfer to the Metropolitan Board of Works is the right course, but that would only be exchanging the frying-pan for the fire, for the Metropolitan Board of Works is vestry-vestrified to the  $n^{\text{th}}$  power. There is this, however, to be said for the change, that the management of the Board would be uniform, and consequently there would be more combined and effectual resistance to its blunders or misdoings. It would be a larger mark for complaint, and there would be some responsibility. In the parochial system of London there is practically no responsibility whatever. Of the three millions

making the metropolitan population, how many have a part in the boasted local self-government? Parliament is incomparably more accessible. The vestry is an inscrutable mystery. In theory, indeed, LORD BROUGHTON has given us the key to it, but people shrink from the trouble, despairing of setting right so much as there is amiss calling for reformation.

FROM THE MORNING HERALD,

JUNE 19, 1865.

**W**E have had ten years of the Metropolitan Board, and yet London is not perfect. When SIR BENJAMIN HALL was allowed to carry his bill it was thought that HERCULES was verily come. The hero of the Augean stable was indubitably wanted, and we were taught to recognise his embodiment in the Chairman of the Metropolitan Board. Royal honours have since been paid to the heaven-sent woollen-merchant, and yet, after all, we find Parliament crying out that the necessary work is not performed. SIR

JOHN THWAITES has gone through a species of apotheosis, but London is still unclean and untidy—something short of what SIR WILLIAM FRASER calls “a decent place for folks to live in.” The paving, lighting, and cleansing, which were to have been done as the Act said “better,” and as the public hoped “properly,” are pretty much the same as in the year of grace 1855, when the old paving and lighting boards were knocked on the head by an indignant Parliament. SIR WILLIAM FRASER declares that Little Pedlington fares better under the sway of its beadle than the great metropolis under the operation of the new act, with all its gigantic machinery of district boards and elected vestries, headed by a central body with enormous taxing powers. London—that is, the metropolis without the City—is grievously disappointed. The rough has not become smooth, neither has light superseded darkness. Chaos still reigns, and parishes still play at cross-purposes, while each individual parish is itself torn to pieces by rival factions. St. James’s-street, the *via sacra* of the metropolis, is divided against itself, one half being in one parish and the other half in another, each parish having its own peculiar time and method of

paving. Other streets are still worse; one parish macadamises, and another puts down granite blocks, all in the same thoroughfare. Newly-built streets in Lambeth are said to be in a "wretched state," although inhabited by wealthy people. The High-street of that important borough, although furnishing a highway from the establishment of one of its parliamentary representatives to the palace of the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, is said to be in "such a horrible condition," that no represented borough in the kingdom can produce its equal. Old and new, the streets of Lambeth are said to be "very disgraceful;" yet it has a very leviathan vestry, in which its most distinguished men are not ashamed to play a prominent part. This elected body meets in a "hall," has a gallery for strangers, and talks by the hour, as if the fate of the nation depended on its eloquence. One hundred and twenty gentlemen preside over the paving, lighting, and cleansing of Lambeth, and yet they cannot give the archbishop of the province a decent road to his dwelling. But Lambeth is not peculiar, though remarkable; all London, outside the City walls, presents an aspect of confusion and disorder. SIR WILLIAM has ranged through its six-and-forty

districts, or at least the majority of them, and he comes back like the spies from Canaan, with a very bad report of what ought to be a good land. In all his time he failed to find so many as five lamp-posts that stood upright, or a single lamp that was made as it ought to be made. The gas, moreover, was villanously bad, and seemed to burn more dimly in the streets than it did in the houses. Sanitary science, which was to work such wonders under the new *régime*, could neither lay the dust nor remove the mud. All sorts of pulverised abominations floated upon the air when the weather was dry, while a hideous compost covered the roads when the showers were frequent. Not even the kennels were properly constructed, and in winter the "slush" was frightful. Such was London, despite the expectations based on LORD LLANOVER's pet child, the Act 18 and 19 Vict. cap. 120.

What, then, is to be done? SIR WILLIAM asked for a Royal Commission; but the indefatigable baronet was worth a whole commission in himself, and had made a speech containing facts enough to fill a blue book. Even SIR GEORGE GREY, with an unusual inspiration of good sense, remarked that a Royal Commission

could not be expected to tell the House more than was known, already. The hon. members all knew, in reference to the metropolitan districts, that the pavements were rough and the streets were dark, that there was mud and there was dust, that the roads were mended with broken stones, which the horses had to grind to powder, or paved with blocks in divers ways after the most fantastic fashion,—that, in short, everything was done as it ought not to be done, or else left undone altogether. There was one depth, however, into which SIR WILLIAM had not dived,—he had not attended a vestry meeting, or a meeting of a board of works; he spoke on this point from hearsay. We could recommend the hon. member for Ludlow to add this one item to his otherwise comprehensive experience. Nothing but a personal visit can realise the scenes which are sometimes to be witnessed on such occasions, or the stolid dulness which dozes over the most frightful evils. SIR WILLIAM, although he did his work so well, might also have gone another step further; he spoke of the streets and the pavements, the water-carts and the lamp-posts, but the worthy baronet says nothing as to the houses! A Royal Commission to inquire into

the sanitary state of the dwellings occupied by the poor might almost frighten Parliament into holding its sittings at Oxford. It is true, indeed, that "the inhabitants of Nineveh and Babylon" were never packed together like the inhabitants "of London." So much the worse for London, when this "packing" is accompanied by a lamentable disregard of decency and cleanliness. The squalid appearance of the poor is not always their own fault, neither is their sickness always the direct visitation of PROVIDENCE; "killed" by neglect of the district board," might be inscribed over many a little grave, and not a few larger ones—only the poor have no epitaphs. We fear that if the whole truth were revealed we should find that, in regard to the sanitary state of its poor, London is in a worse condition now than when the Metropolis Local Management Act first came into operation. Despite all that the Act says to the contrary, there are houses without water and without drainage, where cleanliness is impossible, where decency cannot be maintained, where health is a miracle, and where death is a deliverance. If SIR WILLIAM is shocked at the outside of the sepulchre, what will he say when he looks within? If he is scan-

dalised at Pall Mall, St. James's-street, and Piccadilly, what will he say to the *cul de sacs* and *terra incognita* of Bethnal-green and St. George's, Southwark.

Still we fall back on the question,—what is to be done? “Give more power to the Metropolitan Board of Works,” says SIR GEORGE GREY. Thanks to the Home Secretary, but this is a hair of the dog that bit us, and shall we be cured thereby? The Metropolitan Board itself is but the topmost twig of this barren fig-tree. First, we have the ratepayer,—the seed and root of all; then up comes the vestryman, full of show and promise; the next stage brings us to the district board, where we find dignity ready to burst the bud. Finally there comes the blossom, the full bloom of parochial splendour, culminating in the blushing honours of Spring-gardens. “More power for the Metropolitan Board!” SIR WILLIAM FRASER might well say that London had but few friends. Whenever the metropolis puts up a cry in its misery it is referred to the forty gentlemen who constitute the great central Board of Works. They are to pave Lambeth and put the posts upright; they are to work the fire-engines and build the Thames



Embankment; they are to lay the dust and scrape up the mud; they are to pave Pall Mall in a proper manner, and mend the roads without killing the horses. If there is anything else that London requires to have done, there is no need to trouble the Home Secretary or the Prime Minister; the simple remedy is to place everything in the hands of the Metropolitan Board, and all that London wants will be forthwith performed to its entire satisfaction.

Such is the dream of 1865, and a very pleasant vision we own it to be, so far as the promised result is concerned. But there is an element of mischief which it is exceedingly hard to keep out. The great mass of the ratepayers are too busy to attend to local affairs. Self-interest and self-conceit push themselves forward, and soon elbow aside those who, with better qualifications, are less anxious for the office. Hence our local boards fail to represent the better sense of the ratepayers, and as the Metropolitan Board is itself elected by its auxiliaries, the central authority is more or less pervaded by the same element which paralyses the action of the lesser bodies. The election of vestrymen has been described to SIR WILLIAM FRASER as "a mere farce." We would ask SIR

WILLIAM, if the house is built on the sand, shall we be wise to run into it? Existing evils are doubtless great; but the suggested remedy seems fraught with the virus of the very disease we seek to cure.







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